

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

[I.D. 011199D]

Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement Regarding Proposed Issuance of an Incidental Take Permit to the City of Tacoma, Washington, for Water Storage and Withdrawal and Forest Management in the Green River Watershed, King County, Washington

AGENCIES: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Commerce; Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, USFWS and NMFS (the Services) intend to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) regarding the proposed issuance of an Incidental Take Permit (Permit) to the City of Tacoma for take of endangered and threatened species, in accordance with the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act). The Permit applicant is the City of Tacoma, Washington, Public Utilities, Water Division (Tacoma Water), and the application is related to water storage and withdrawal from the Green River and to forest management activities in the Green River Watershed, in south King County, Washington. Tacoma Water is preparing a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) as required by the Act, and intends to request a Permit for northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis*), marbled murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*), gray wolf (*Canis lupus*), peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), and grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos*). Tacoma Water also plans to seek coverage for approximately 25 currently unlisted fish and wildlife species (including Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) and the Puget Sound distinct population segment of the bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*), which are proposed for listing under the Act, and other anadromous and resident fishes) under specific provisions of the Permit, should these species be listed in the future. The HCP and Permit would be in effect for 50 years. Through development of a joint EIS, the applicant also proposes to

comply with the requirements of the Washington State Environmental Policy Act.

The Services are furnishing this notice in order to (1) advise other agencies and the public of our intentions and (2) announce that a joint draft EIS is expected to be available for public review and comment during the first quarter of 1999.

ADDRESSES: Comments and requests for information should be sent to Tim Romanski, Fish and Wildlife Service, 510 Desmond Drive, SE, Suite 102, Lacey, Washington 98503, (360) 753-5823; or Mike Grady, National Marine Fisheries Service, 510 Desmond Drive, SE, Suite 103, Lacey, Washington 98503, (360) 753-6052.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In accordance with the Act, Tacoma Water will prepare an HCP for, among other things, minimizing and mitigating to the maximum extent practicable any such take of listed species which could occur incidental to the proposed Plan activities (watershed management). Previous announcements relating to this project indicated that an environmental review (EIS or Environmental Assessment) would be conducted. The Services have now concluded that an EIS will be prepared. Public input into the environmental review of this proposal was obtained during a public scoping period conducted from August 21 to September 21, 1998, and was announced in a previous **Federal Register** notice (63 FR 44918, August 21, 1998). That public scoping period was used to fulfill scoping requirements under 40 CFR 1501.7, consistent with 46 FR 18026 (March 23, 1981), as amended at 51 FR 15618 (April 25, 1985).

Tacoma Water owns and manages a water diversion dam and associated facilities (Headworks) on the Green River, approximately 13,600 acres of land upstream of the diversion dam on both sides of the River, and a well field (North Fork Well Field) located approximately 5 miles upstream of the Headworks. Tacoma Water operates and manages the Headworks, watershed lands, and the North Fork Well Field as the principal source of municipal and industrial water for the City of Tacoma and for portions of Pierce and King Counties. Howard Hanson Dam and Howard Hanson Reservoir, owned and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), are also located on the Green River, upstream of the City's Headworks. City lands in the watershed are adjacent to the Dam and Reservoir on all sides.

Current trends in population growth within the Puget Sound region create a

need for Tacoma Water to explore possibilities for increasing its water supply capabilities. To meet this need, Tacoma has developed two separate, but related plans. The first of these, the Second Supply Project, involves improvements at Tacoma's Headworks and the construction of a 33.5-mile long pipeline from the Headworks to the City of Tacoma. This project is the subject of a State Environmental Policy Act review in the document entitled "Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the Second Supply Project, October 18, 1994," prepared by Tacoma Water. The second related plan was developed in conjunction with the Corps and in cooperation with the Services, the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington Department of Ecology, and Muckleshoot Indian Tribe for increasing the size of Howard Hanson Dam and, consequently, Howard Hanson Reservoir. Known as the Additional Water Storage Project, this plan incorporates restoration and mitigation measures (including fish passage) to alleviate the historical barrier to migrating salmon and hence spawning, created by the City's Headworks and the Corps' Dam. This project is the subject of a National Environmental Policy Act review in the document entitled "Final Feasibility Report and Final Environmental Impact Statement, Howard Hanson Dam, Green River, Washington, August 1998," prepared by the Seattle District of the Corps.

Tacoma Water's activities associated with the Second Supply Project, the Additional Water Storage Project, and other management activities on the City's watershed lands have the potential to impact species subject to protection under the Act. Section 10 of the Act contains provisions for the issuance of incidental take permits to non-Federal landowners for the take of endangered and threatened species, provided the take is incidental to otherwise lawful activities and will not appreciably reduce the likelihood of the survival and recovery of the species in the wild. In addition, the applicant must prepare and submit to the Services for approval an HCP containing a strategy for minimizing and mitigating all take associated with the proposed activities to the maximum extent practicable. The applicant must also demonstrate that adequate funding will be provided to ensure the HCP will be implemented and monitored throughout the proposed 50-year life of the HCP.

Activities proposed for coverage under the Incidental Take Permit include the following:

(1) Water withdrawal at Tacoma Water's Headworks for Municipal and Industrial Water Supply, which will reduce flows and have concomitant habitat effects downstream, including the bypass of fish at the Headworks intake, and inundate the impoundment area;

(2) Water withdrawal from the North Fork Well Field for Municipal and Industrial Water Supply, which will potentially reduce flows in the North Fork Green River above Howard Hanson Dam reservoir;

(3) Construction of Headworks improvements (anticipated to occur during a 2-year period from the third quarter of 1999 through the third quarter of 2001). Such construction will cause:

(a) Bypassing of fish at the Headworks intake during construction;

(b) Raising the Headworks diversion dam by about 6.5 feet (2 meters) which will extend the inundation pool to about 2,570 feet (811 meters) upstream of the Headworks diversion;

(c) Realigning and enlarging the existing intake and adding upgraded fish screens and bypass facilities for downstream passage;

(d) Reshaping the Green River channel downstream of the existing diversion to accommodate the future installation of an efficient trap and haul facility for upstream fish passage; and

(e) Installing, monitoring, and maintaining the instream structures in the impoundment for fisheries mitigation for raising the Headworks dam;

(4) Fish and water quality impacts related to the Headworks improvement construction;

(5) Operation and maintenance of a wetland restoration project at Auburns Narrows associated with the Second Supply Project;

(6) Operation of a downstream fish bypass facility at the Headworks;

(7) Tacoma watershed forest management activities;

(8) Monitoring of downstream fish passage through a proposed fish passage facility at Howard Hanson Dam associated with the Additional Water Supply Project;

(9) Monitoring and maintenance of Additional Water Supply Project fish habitat restoration projects and Additional Water Supply Project fish and wildlife habitat mitigation projects; and

(10) Restoration of anadromous fish above Howard Hanson Dam by trapping and hauling of adults returning to the Headworks and, if found beneficial to restoration efforts, possible planting of hatchery juveniles.

Alternatives for the environmental review cover two distinct sets of activities: (1) The withdrawal of water at the Tacoma Water Supply Intake (Headworks) at River Mile 61.0 and associated water withdrawal activities and (2) the management of City-owned forestlands in the upper Green River watershed above the Headworks. For the purposes of clarity, the alternatives for water withdrawal are considered separate from the alternatives for forestland management.

Water withdrawal alternatives include (1) No Action (continue current water withdrawal practices); (2) Proposed Action (with primary features including upstream and downstream fish passage, water flow management for anadromous fish, and riparian habitat restoration); (3) Reduced Withdrawal Alternative (supply Tacoma's service area only); (4) Reduced Withdrawal Alternative (supply Tacoma Water's current service area and the Lakehaven Utility District); and (5) supply Tacoma, Seattle, and South King County communities without the Howard Hanson Dam Additional Water Storage Project.

Forestland management alternatives include (1) No Action (continue current forest management and timber harvest practices); (2) Proposed Action (with primary features including species-specific protection measures for wildlife species of interest); (3) Management of Tacoma City Lands in the Upper Green River Watershed with no timber harvest; and (4) Management of Tacoma City Lands in the Upper Green River Watershed with timber harvesting to create or enhance fish and/or wildlife habitat only.

The environmental review of this project will be conducted in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), National Environmental Policy Act Regulations (40 CFR parts 1500 through 1508), other appropriate Federal laws and regulations, and policies and procedures of the Services for compliance with those regulations.

Dated: January 13, 1999.

Kevin Collins,

Chief, Endangered Species Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

Dated: January 11, 1999.

Thomas Dwyer,

Acting Regional Director, Region 1, Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, Oregon.

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

[I.D. 010799B]

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fish and Wildlife Service

Availability of an Annual Report on Implementation of the Conservation Plan for Atlantic Salmon in Seven Maine Rivers

AGENCIES: National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Commerce; Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The State of Maine has submitted to NMFS and FWS (the Services) the draft annual report on its 1998 implementation of the *Atlantic Salmon Conservation Plan for Seven Maine Rivers* (Conservation Plan).

DATES: Written comments should be received on or before March 8, 1999.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be addressed to Mary Colligan, NMFS, Protected Resources Division, One Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930. Written comments may also be sent by facsimile to (978) 281-9394.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mary Colligan, NMFS, at the same address (978-281-9116) or Paul Nickerson, FWS, Region 5, Endangered Species Division, 300 Westgate Center Drive, Hadley, MA 01035 (413-253-8615).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Services are soliciting comments from the public on the adequacy of the protective measures in place, implementation activities during 1998, and the effect of these protective measures on Atlantic salmon and their habitat. The Services are particularly interested in assistance in determining whether the protective measures in place, including the provisions of the Conservation Plan, remain adequate to protect the species in light of current knowledge. After public comments and comments from the Services are addressed by the State of Maine in the final annual report, the Services will update the 1995 Atlantic salmon status review. If that update indicates that the species is now in danger of extinction or likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future, the Services will promptly issue a proposed listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).